ISSUE #4

PERSPECTIVES

A PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS

THE CRUX OF COLLABORATION: ARE YOU A GOOD PARTNER?

| DAN WRONA

Master of Education
Higher Education Leadership and Social Justice

Designed for working professionals in higher education settings, Bellarmine's M.Ed. in Higher Education Leadership and Social Justice is a 30-hour, fully online master's program that provides students with the knowledge and professional experiences to lead and serve in a variety of positions in higher education.

- **100% online delivery**
- **Earn your M.Ed. at your own pace***
- **One-on-one program advising and mentorship**
- **No work experience required**

** Coursework can be completed in three semesters*

BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY
IN VERITATIS AMORE

Learn more at bellarmine.edu/mhed

IN THIS ISSUE:

Partnerships & Collaboration

in Fraternity / Sorority Life

7 **THE PATH TO FAILURE**
| Dr. Jamison Keller & Noah Borton

11 **DECONSTRUCTING THE DYSFUNCTION**
| Kyle Martin & Brooke Goodman

15 **THE CRUX OF COLLABORATION**
| Dan Wrona

20 **A COMMON PURPOSE**
| Jason H. Nolen-Doerr, J.D.

23 **YOU CANNOT DO IT ALONE**
| Harriette Baker & Kahlin McKeown

27 **PUTTING POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS INTO PRACTICE**
| Mackenzie Baker

31 **SAME TEAM MENTALITY**
| Donald Abels

35 **CREATING AND NURTURING PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS**
| Michael A. Goodman & Lindsey Templeton

40 **USING CAS STANDARDS IN COLLABORATIONS WITH HEADQUARTERS**
| Dan Bureau & Monica Miranda

LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

I have just returned from the Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, where in my President's address I challenged members that the time has come to let go of old ways of thinking and to seek new ways of moving our industry forward. Inherent in that message is the need to work together across the divisions of umbrella group membership and campus-based and headquarters-based employment. As I stated, we must "stop questioning the level of commitment and the intentions of people whose paychecks come from a different place than yours" and "start forming meaningful, constructive partnerships." So of course, I could not be more thrilled this edition of Perspectives is about collaboration and partnerships.

In my spare time, I coach youth soccer. As the old adage goes, there's no I in team. Building team dynamics, on and off the field, is as important as building individual player skills. I can have a team full of all-stars, but if they cannot trust each other to play their positions, anticipate where the ball will go, communicate the play, give their best effort, play to their individual strengths, and demonstrate good sportsmanship, then their talent is irrelevant. This same winning synergy will help us perform at our highest level as professionals. You cannot win a team game if every player has blinders on and is only thinking of themselves.

As we begin the new year, I ask you make a commitment to forming new and strengthening old partnerships. Seek opportunities for collaboration with someone outside of fraternity/sorority life. At a time when many of us feel strapped for resources and wish we had more staff and a bigger budget, we can look to strategic partnerships on and off campus to expand the services we can provide our students. We need to be asking:

- Who isn't at the table that should be? Could be?
- What expertise or viewpoint is missing from current conversations?
- What can I learn from another functional area or industry that can help me think differently about my work?
- Who do I need to have an authentic conversation with so we can repair our relationship and work from the same playbook?

We stand at a precipice and simply cannot afford to go it alone or worse yet, in opposition to one another. We are all on the same team.

Wendi Kinney, President

LETTER FROM THE **EDITORS**

This issue of Perspectives arrives as we transition into a new year. As with any transition, this presents an opportunity to pause in reflection. What challenges have we faced over the past 12 months? What opportunities exist moving forward? What are we doing well, and what difficult conversations need to be had regarding the aspects we aren't doing well? How have we failed? This type of reflection might result in more questions than answers based on the current reality we, as professionals and as a field, currently find ourselves in. It is no secret there is a lot of uncertainty regarding the future of the fraternity and sorority experience. The one thing that is not uncertain, however, is the status quo can no longer persist. Something is going – and needs – to change.

For some, this message may seem extreme or uncomfortable to acknowledge. Failure to understand our reality, however, will not generate positive results. Continued disregard of our responsibility will lead to intensified external pressure. If we do not change something, someone else will change it for us.

So, where will we go from here?

Within this issue are messages of utopia and dystopia. The reality of where we are now and where we will end up is probably somewhere in between. Yet, we should not leave that outcome to chance. Assuredly we will need to join in collective effort to have any hope at the former, and if we fail to do so we are far more likely to fight our way to the latter.

In the movie version of our lives we would find ourselves at a single epic decision point. The one moment where we decide we are either going to be partners or adversaries. Friends or foes. Our lives are not this climactic, nor our decision points as conveniently identified. Our decision points will be far subtler; they will pop up on a daily basis as we decide how we are going to show up in our work with each other. Over time, this is how partnership will be constructed in our field.

Of course, the type of partnership that can drive success is not forged through feel good statements and applause lines in keynote speeches. It comes as the result of work. This work is authentic, it is selfless, and it is hard. Our authors in this issue start to lay out a guide for that work. While they offer no easy or magic answers to the vexing issues of our community, they do offer pragmatic and tangible steps we can all take toward being the strong partners our stakeholders, and most importantly our students, need us to become.

Emilee Danielson-Burke & Noah Borton
Co-Editors

Social MEDIA

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Anything on your mind? Voice your feedback!
Whether it is good or bad, compliments or criticisms,
we want to hear it!

facebook.com/AFA1976

#AFAPerspectives

#AFAPerspectives

Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors

Perspectives is the official publication of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, Inc. (AFA). Views expressed are those of the individual authors/contributors/advertisers and are not necessarily those of the Association. AFA encourages the submission of articles, essays, ideas, and advertisements.

Submissions should be directed to the Editor, advertising queries to the staff.

EDITORS:

Emilee Danielson-Burke, Editor
Theta Xi Fraternity
emileedanielson@gmail.com | (314) 993-6294

Noah Borton, Editor
Delta Upsilon Fraternity
borton@deltau.org | *(317) 875-8900 ext. 206*

Brooke Goodman, Assistant Editor
Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority

AFA STAFF:

Andrea Starks-Corbin
Director of Marketing & Communications
andrea@afa1976.org

Justin England
Graphic Designer
justin@afa1976.org

2018 EDITORIAL BOARD:

Ashley Rastetter, Kenyon College

Brittany Barnes Deeg, RISE Partnerships

G. Andrew Hohn, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Gabrielle Rimmaudo, Chi Psi Fraternity

Dr. Katherine Carnell, University of Mount Union

Katie Schneider, Carnegie Mellon University

Kyle Martin, Eastern Michigan University

Meredith Bielaska, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Nikia Jefferson, Indiana University

Travis Roberts, The George Washington University

Tyler Havens, Western Illinois University

Will Takewell, University of Kentucky

Zachary Knight, Colorado State University

CALL FOR PERSPECTIVES AUTHORS

We want you to write for AFA Perspectives!

CONTACT THE 2019 EDITORS
TO SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE IDEA

brookegoodman01@gmail.com

borton@deltau.org

THE PATH TO
FAILURE
DR. JAMISON KELLER / NOAH BORTON

The Apocalypse, the end of days! This is a topic that makes for great entertainment as the zombies of The Walking Dead or the ghosts of American Horror Story fill our screens. The topic is less comfortable in real life as we watch or experience the destruction of hurricanes, fires and floods. Similarly, it does not feel good to think about catastrophic outcomes in our professional lives. This feels beyond our control. We do not want to face the possibility that everything we know will be altered. Instead, we choose to ignore the signs of trouble ahead, as confronting it in the moment is too psychologically challenging. By doing so, we convince ourselves into a false sense of reality. Despite these psychological safety nets, a part of us still takes note of what is happening. In a moment of reflection, or a quiet conversation with a colleague, we ask the question … "Could fraternity and sorority life really come to an end?"

Fraternal apocalypse? This is an extreme question, no doubt. However, it is a question better asked before the zombies than after. To illustrate the point, we offer a fictitious reflection that could potentially happen at an AFA Annual Meeting in the not so distant future. Some of the answers that emerge may be less comforting than we might hope.

THE APOCALYPSE IS UPON US

In many ways it seems like just yesterday we were attending the Interfraternity Institute as new professionals. We were so excited to meet other new professionals while starting our careers within the highly specialized area of fraternities and sororities. In fact, despite representing different aspects of our profession, it was great to immediately connect with some new headquarters staff as we began a conversation about our perceived differences between headquarters and campus-based work. We each represented opposite sides of one coin, yet all chose this work because we had such positive and life changing fraternal experiences. We were not completely naïve, though. We expected challenges, which is why we appreciated how the curriculum included tackling our industry's biggest problems while setting us up for long careers. We left that summer feeling like we could change the world, one student, one chapter, and one community at a time. With some reflection and new tools in our toolbox, we had bought in to the idea we would be making a difference!

To think this is now our twelfth AFA Annual Meeting. One aspect we used to love at this gathering is our regular IFI reunion, although we seem to have dwindled down yet again this year to only a handful of us. What happened? Our world seems so much darker now. Those of us on campuses are pressured by our presidents to not be the next campus named in the media for some horrible sexual assault case or death. Those of us who work for inter/national offices seem just as pressured to avoid those tragedies, while also fighting for continued relevance. How did we go from what was an exciting opportunity to spend our careers changing lives to now just trying to save lives? Can we agree even our relationships have changed, despite over a decade of this work together?

Perhaps that change began when my campus suspended all social activities among our fraternity and sorority community. You immediately called me wondering how you could help despite the limitations from working for only one of the organizations with a chapter on my campus. I responded that despite my many years here, the decision was made without much consultation from my office. However, I knew we would be starting a task force to respond. I expressed hope for a strong partnership throughout the process.

We started to see some great responses from inter/national umbrella organizations implementing new initiatives such as banning hard alcohol. While these efforts were highly praised, much confusion followed in terms of whose responsibility it was to enforce these much needed and sensible health and safety mandates. Our local Interfraternity Council leaders were concerned about "underground efforts" to get around these mandates, and deemed it impossible to manage themselves. They also became worried about personal liability should they choose to continue patrolling parties and other events. They quickly became frustrated as pressure from individual sorority members to avoid the rules escalated. The local Panhellenic leaders were supportive of the men, but they struggled to create accountability around what they determined was largely a fraternity issue. Additionally, we experienced a wide discrepancy in enforcement from different inter/national organizations. Divides were clearly forming on both the inter/national and local levels.

Just when our task force was making progress, the national narrative shifted. A new rash of incidents

across the country was headlining every major news outlet. This made our task force members even more concerned about the ability to create positive change with the current lack of resources, staff, and structure of student self-governed private organizations. Some members considered establishing a substantial "Greek fee" to cover the costs the university deemed essential for more staff and educational programming. Others advocated cutting all ties with fraternities and sororities. My hope for strong partnership was for naught. As tensions rose, the desire to engage others faded. Thus, after several months of work it was hard for me to give you the news that our campus decided to defer recruitment and sustain our suspension of activities indefinitely.

Local alumni began to complicate things further. Some of the best advisors stepped down due to concerns over their personal liability and frustration with the lack of buy in from some students and fellow alumni. These vacancies were quickly filled with alumni that were adamantly against any changes or additions to their own undergraduate experiences. These alumni began to organize at the local level and questioned the value of campus recognition. With increased scrutiny and a long list of new mandates from the university, this new coalition pushed their chapters to begin separating from their local councils and forget about campus recognition. They determined they could do things better on their own.

Many inter/national organizations initially opposed these efforts, but not all. This created two functioning Interfraternity Councils, with one officially recognized by the university and advised by traditional campus-based staff, while the other unrecognized council was advised by a new alumni IFC advisory board. The day to day campus experience quickly became fractured as recognized organizations were forbidden from interacting with their peers from non-recognized groups. This placed an extremely tough burden on student leaders from all councils. Our National Pan-Hellenic and Multicultural groups became further dissociated from the larger community and the institution.

Houses became the front line of the battle. Alumni groups and inter/national organizations had invested heavily in these properties for decades. They also served as the primary location for several incidents that were the impetus for this conflict. Local civic leaders started getting involved through efforts to "reign-in" unrecognized chapters. The local city attorney began aggressively pursuing legal actions against them. Increased taxes were levied, and stringent health and fire inspections were becoming a regular occurrence. Alumni and students fought tirelessly to protect their assets and their homes. Substantial emotional and financial investment made this the "red line" that could not be crossed. The house must be saved. Organizations without housing became increasingly alienated, and programs that used to benefit them were canceled, as funds were directed toward legal and compliance efforts at the expense of educational programming.

As our situation evolved, the outside attention intensified. The outcome on our campus could set a precedent for other communities nearing a similar breaking point. This only served to exacerbate tensions. Some entities viewed this as their "big stand," and decided to go all in on the fight. We tried to hold things together by bringing key organizational leaders together, and were making some good headway. Then, the unrecognized IFC advisory board filed a lawsuit to fight new city ordinance restrictions. It was like gasoline on fire. The local community was outraged. Lawyers and lobbyists were brought in on both sides of the legal fight. It became clear that things had spiraled beyond any of our individual control, those of us who had spent years working with these students were no longer directing the conversation, we were all just reacting.

As the legal conflicts escalated, they exacerbated other existing conflicts between different organizations, different chapters on campus, and different departments within the institution. There were organizations that wanted to set higher standards and reconnect with campus, others that believed independence was the way to go, and some wanted no interfraternal standards at all. Similarly, on the campus side different philosophies for how to approach fraternity and sorority life emerged. The conflicts caused different departments to become more entrenched in their silos as they sought to protect their interests.

Some inter/national organizations doubled down on protecting their positions. Efforts were launched to lobby for changes in local ordinances and to influence local elections. Fees for political

consultants, PR agencies, and lawyers started to pile up. As more and more was spent, the ability to walk away or shift course became less and less. Positions became so entrenched that backing down was an untenable option. Every action by one entity would trigger a response.

With every back and forth the conflict became less centered on student needs and more focused on winning the conflict. Resources were reallocated from addressing core issues to winning the fight. Different conflicts emerged, overlapped, and piled onto one another.

"WITH EVERY BACK AND FORTH THE CONFLICT BECAME LESS CENTERED ON STUDENT NEEDS AND MORE FOCUSED ON WINNING THE CONFLICT."

The responses were not uniform or predictable. Neither campuses nor organizations are monolithic. Both are complex organizations with many individual entities and interests. Additionally, they exist within a community of similar, but not uniform organizations. Tertiary stakeholders such as vendors, landlords, donors, parents, and faculty were exerting influence on the conflicts. There were a lot of voices in the conversation. Within each conflict the cleavages of who was on what side of the conflict would shift. This created fracturing, and as things started to fracture it exacerbated an emphasis on self-interest. Favoring self-interest generated more conflict, as entities became less willing to act in the best interest of the whole. Ultimately, this created a spiraling effect and the system started to break.

At the conclusion of this downward spiral, the end did not necessarily mean the end, so much as the end to the world as we knew it. Despite some dire days, and some apocalyptic predictions, we were not left with a collegiate landscape void of fraternities and sororities. However, we were left with a landscape of disjointed and scattered groups. Now, we have little uniformity and little collaboration. Some organizations struggle to remain financially viable in this landscape, and many institutions decided to repurpose their fraternity and sorority resources. While we are both still here at the annual meeting, still working for our students, the vision we espoused when we first became friends is no longer within our grasps. We are left to do what we can in our own little bubbles, while the greater conflicts rage on around us.

Entertainment meets reality at this point in the story. Just like in The Walking Dead or American Horror Story, this doesn't necessarily mean the world ends. Rather, we do end up with pockets of groups here and there, carving out some form of existence within this new post-apocalyptic fraternal world. Everyone out for themselves, just trying to survive.

A CAUTIONARY TALE

This story has been a hypothetical look into the future. While it is a fictional story, many of the actions described are not unheard of, and the progression of events is not as far-fetched as we might hope. It is easy to write off an apocalyptic tale as unrealistic hyperbole. However, an honest assessment may show we are further down this path than we might care to admit.

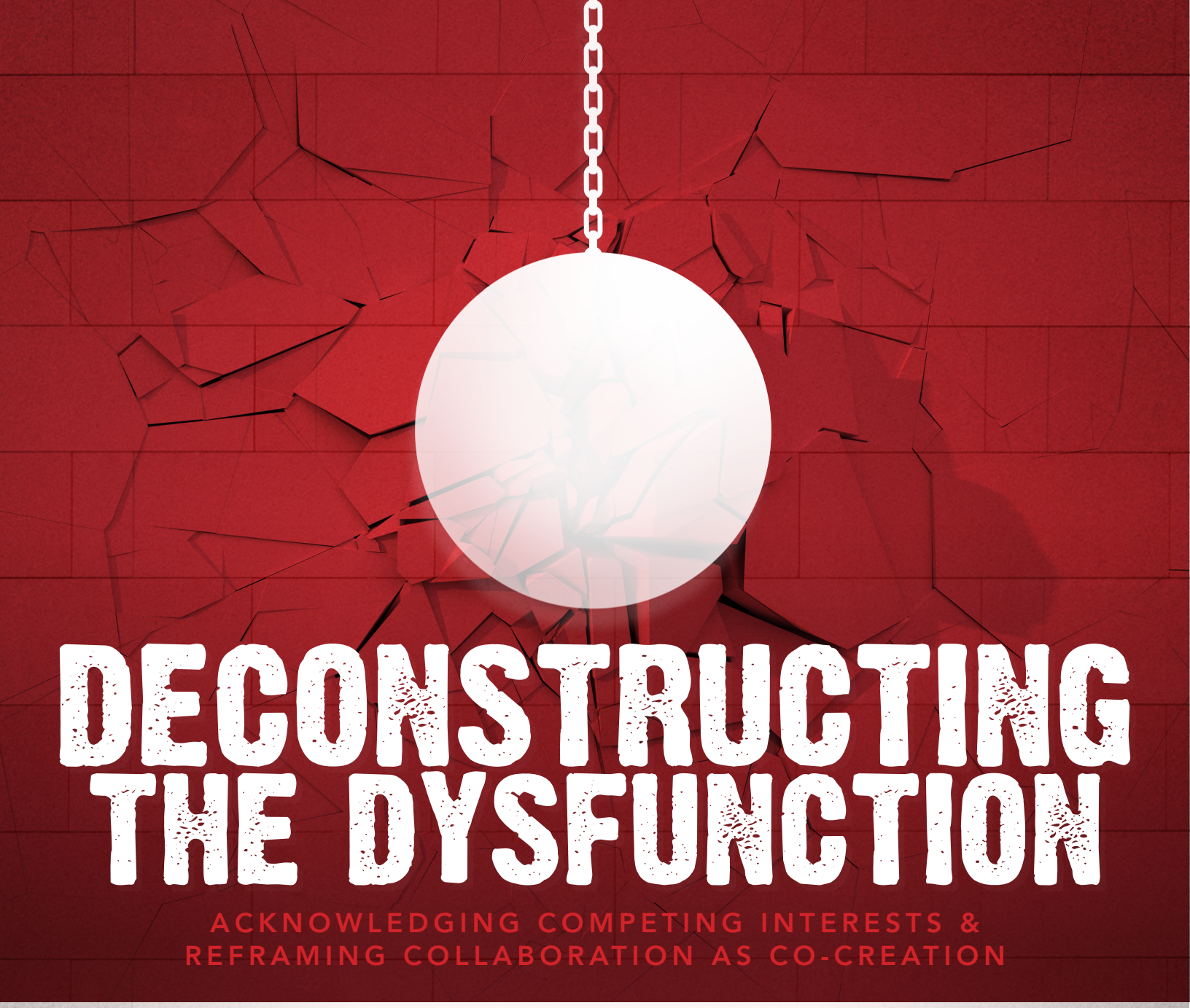
AUTHOR BIOS

Dr. Jamison Keller
Georgia Institute of Technology

Dr. Jamison Keller is the Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life at Georgia Institute of Technology. He is in his 21st year of professionally working with and volunteering for the fraternal industry.

Noah Borton
Delta Upsilon Fraternity

Noah Borton is the Senior Director of Educational Programs at Delta Upsilon Fraternity. He has worked for multiple institutions and national organizations over the last 18 years. In addition, he serves as the Editor of Perspectives for the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors.



DECONSTRUCTING THE DYSFUNCTION

ACKNOWLEDGING COMPETING INTERESTS & REFRAMING COLLABORATION AS CO-CREATION

KYLE MARTIN & BROOKE GOODMAN

Fraternity and sorority professionals frequently find themselves wading through waters of conflict, politics, and ambiguity while attempting to work with a wide variety of stakeholders to develop strategies for effective collaboration. As a field, we face constant and increasing pressure to change, address systemic issues that are ingrained within the fabric of society, and identify solutions that will last as the landscape we exist in continues to evolve.

Generally, the daily challenges we face as campus-based professionals, headquarters staff, volunteers, association representatives, umbrella organizations, senior-level administrators, companies, and vendors, can at times feel overwhelming and impossible to overcome. What if, however, the greatest challenge this industry faces is not that we haven't found solutions to the problems, but rather, we can't always agree on the problems, let alone how to address them?

In other words, what if we, as an industry, are our own worst problem?

To better illustrate this, consider a familiar example. Many would agree binge drinking is a serious problem that plagues the fraternity and sorority experience and its potential for a high-quality impact. However, viewpoints on the degree to which binge drinking is an issue, responsibilities parties hold, and potential solutions to eliminate the problem vary depending on the stakeholder. Within the conversation related to binge drinking, the following questions emerge:

1. Whose responsibility is it to provide education to members on harm reduction and responsible alcohol consumption? What resources are available to ensure education is comprehensive?
2. Whose responsibility is it to intervene when alumni/ae return to campus for Homecoming and encourage poor decision-making around alcohol?
3. Who should hold members accountable if they create unhealthy environments? Who is ultimately responsible for tragedies that occur as a result of those unhealthy environments?
4. Whose job is it to lead a multi-year transition to substance-free housing?

When attempting to address issues such as this, we often follow a conventional collaboration model consisting of naming a common purpose, identifying the problem(s), brainstorming potential solutions, developing plans for execution, and assigning roles for implementation.

It is impossible for this model to work, however, when the parties involved have their own perspectives on their roles and interests within the larger landscape of the field. As a result, an issue as seemingly simple as addressing binge drinking becomes incredibly complicated to navigate.

The purpose of this article is to showcase it is okay for fraternity and sorority stakeholders to have different purposes and interests. It would be unreasonable to expect such a wide variety of partners to have the same opinions and methods for achieving desired outcomes. At the same time, while it is necessary to acknowledge and accept these competing interests, this article also aims to emphasize
that it is unacceptable to allow those differences to inhibit collaboration and jeopardize the future of the fraternity and sorority experience.

To begin to dissect this "us" problem, we need to differentiate between "collaboration" and "consensus." Collaboration does not equal consensus, nor should it.

In a 2012 *Forbes* article titled "Consensus – Team Building's Silent Killer," Mike Myatt, Chairman of N2Growth, an executive search firm that offers resources on leadership development, organizational design, and culture transformation, claims "consensus thinking is devastating to all things productive," and cultivates a culture that stifles creativity and individual strengths. Collaboration, on the other hand, means working together toward solutions, gathering talents and ideas, allowing room for different approaches, and recognizing success as teams but also as individuals. It means communicating effectively, engaging in healthy and passionate debate, and negotiating. Collaboration does not mean everyone needs to agree.

This distinction is critical to acknowledge within the fraternity and sorority industry, as disagreement is a constant. With nuance, and taking into account all of the previously mentioned parties' viewpoints, we often disagree on organizational establishment, recognition, and growth, money, stakeholder management, primary audiences, intervention methods, approaches to working with undergraduate students, approaches to working with alumni/alumnae, who should lead the field, priorities, and everything in between. This discourse exists on an even grander stage among institutional and organizational leaders, influential alumni, umbrella organizations, and legal counsels, as they vie for the power to determine the future of the fraternity and sorority experience.

It's not the disagreement that holds us back, though; it's the severe lack of trust in each other to work through that disagreement, demonstrate positive intent, do our jobs, and achieve desired outcomes, that holds us back.

In the book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, author Patrick Lencioni (2002) provides a visual representation of how teams fail. The foundation of this model is an "absence of trust," described as a fear of being vulnerable with team members, preventing trust-building within the team. This absence of trust leads to a fear of conflict, which leads to a lack of commitment, which leads to an avoidance of accountability, which culminates in an inattention to results. In other words, a lack of trust is a recipe for disaster.

Lencioni (2002) describes trust as having confidence in team members, believing their intentions are good, and

having no reason to be protective or careful around the group. An absence of trust is demonstrated by members hiding their weaknesses and mistakes, being afraid to ask for help or give feedback, jumping to conclusions, failing to recognize and utilize others' strengths, and holding grudges.

How often do we see this lack of trust play out within our lives? When is trust missing within the workplace, or within the fraternity and sorority industry? Some additional questions help illustrate this point:

1. When implementing far-reaching change, how often do we relegate key partners to learning critical information via press release or word-of-mouth, as opposed to a direct briefing?
2. When developing a plan for shared governance, how often do we doubt the skills of our partners? How often do we question or criticize their experience or educational background? How often do we complain about inefficient communication?
3. When contacted by an organization or institution, how often do we assume it is self-serving or there is some sort of "catch" to be prepared for?
4. When reflecting upon the current state of the fraternity and sorority industry, how often do we blame others - whether it be colleges/universities, organizations, or umbrella groups - for our problems without taking a critical look at ourselves?
5. When already feeling as if there is too much on our plates, how often do we still choose to take on additional work because we assume others are not capable of doing it? How often does this result in poor performance, thus stifling growth and productivity?

If those questions are answered honestly, it becomes evident we, as individuals and collectively as a field, have a trust problem. As the foundation of what holds teams back, if this problem is not fixed, the fraternity and sorority experience will not move forward.

So what is the opposite of an absence of trust?

According to Lencioni (2002), it is an environment that allows for vulnerability. It means team members own their mistakes and weaknesses, ask for help, accept feedback, give others the benefit of the doubt, take risks, appreciate others' skills, and focus on real issues, as opposed to politics and distractions that get in the way. Teams that provide space for vulnerability are comprised of individuals that act with empathy, seek to understand, and treat others with human dignity.

Taking this into account, and by utilizing these pieces of Lencioni's model, let's consider where we, as a fraternity and sorority field, might currently exist in terms of our ability to be the team we so often claim to be.

Beyond an absence of trust, the second level of dysfunction is a "fear of conflict." Here, members work to maintain artificial harmony instead of engaging in true and productive dialogue. This fear of conflict cultivates an environment where people are afraid to voice concerns and ideas, participate in difficult conversations, and engage across difference.

The third layer is a "lack of commitment," to each other and to objectives, that prevents productivity. Jeff Bezos, Amazon founder, says it best: in order to move forward, we must "disagree and commit" (Bariso, 2017). As it relates to the fraternity and sorority experience, as long as there is a clear path forward, it is okay to disagree - in fact, it is vital for progress. This is only possible if a foundation of trust exists.

The fourth dysfunction is an "avoidance of accountability." This avoidance feeds on excuses, blame, and warped narratives that help us feel better about the part we play in our collective problems. Overall, this avoidance of accountability leads to gossip, resentment, missed opportunity, and poor performance.

Finally, the fifth dysfunction is an "inattention to results." It's a matter of putting personal goals and needs for success above the team's ability to achieve desired outcomes. It's misplaced priorities and selfishness. It's failing to change, grow, and improve.

Utilizing Lencioni's (2002) model and recognizing a foundational element of trust often fails to exist, it's arguably evident the collective fraternity and sorority team we claim to be on is dysfunctional.

So where do we go from here? It might seem bleak. However, it is possible to demonstrate an ability to effectively partner to achieve desired industry outcomes. This requires a collective effort to re-imagine the concept of collaboration within the field, and to embrace discord and co-creation as effective partnership.

As fraternity and sorority professionals, we must remember every individual, organization, institution, and company is its own piece of the puzzle. These pieces constantly interact to create the totality of the fraternity and sorority experience. Each individual piece maintains a different purpose, set of objectives, perspective, and ideas for how to improve. The reality is, while we all influence and are influenced by each other, we are not one team, with one purpose. We are an interconnected web of individuals and groups working toward different goals within shared parameters.

Although this is the case, it does not mean collective progress cannot occur. When presented with an overarching problem, efforts to "develop a solution" often fail because there is no silver-bullet to fix the wide array of problems that exist. If we take into account the web of challenges we face, and potential solutions for each, we engage in a more productive problem-solving process with greater opportunity to move the needle than trying to implement single solutions within a complex field.

Above all else, we need trust. We need vulnerability. We need less ego and more hard work. We need more efficient and purposeful communication. We need people willing to acknowledge mistakes, and people willing to openly discuss a way to move forward from them. We need senior-level administrators, executive-level staff, and umbrella organizations to stop operating in silos, recognize the implications of their actions, and model the way for those tasked with managing the fallout of their decision-making. Finally, we need to recognize that if we are not disagreeing, it means we are probably out of touch with the individual roles we play, and thus not maximizing performance.

As fraternity and sorority professionals, our desired outcome can arguably be to create a high-impact fraternity or sorority experience for the individuals we serve. To achieve this collective outcome, we must recognize that every stakeholder should be working toward separate objectives and utilizing different methods to achieve their own goals that support mutually valued outcomes. Only after we accept that competing interests are okay, healthy conflict is needed, and trust in each other to do our individual parts is critical for collective success, will we be able to reframe collaboration as co-creation and move the fraternity and sorority experience forward.

"WE ARE AN INTERCONNECTED WEB OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WORKING TOWARD DIFFERENT GOALS WITHIN SHARED PARAMETERS."

REFERENCES

Bariso, J. (2017, April 13). In just 3 words, Amazon's Jeff Bezos taught a brilliant lesson in leadership. Inc. Retrieved from https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/it-took-jeff-bezos-only-three-words-to-drop-the-best-advice-youll-hear-today.html

Lencioni, P. (2002). The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Myatt, M. (2012, April 19). Consensus - Team building's silent killer. Forbes. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2012/04/19/consensus-team-buildings-silentkiller/#a901d112b184

AUTHOR BIOS

Kyle Martin
Eastern Michigan University

Kyle Martin currently serves as the Coordinator for Greek Life and Leadership Development at Eastern Michigan University where he is also a doctoral student studying Educational Leadership. He previously worked at Delta Upsilon Fraternity, the North American Interfraternity Conference, and Alpha Kappa Lambda Fraternity.

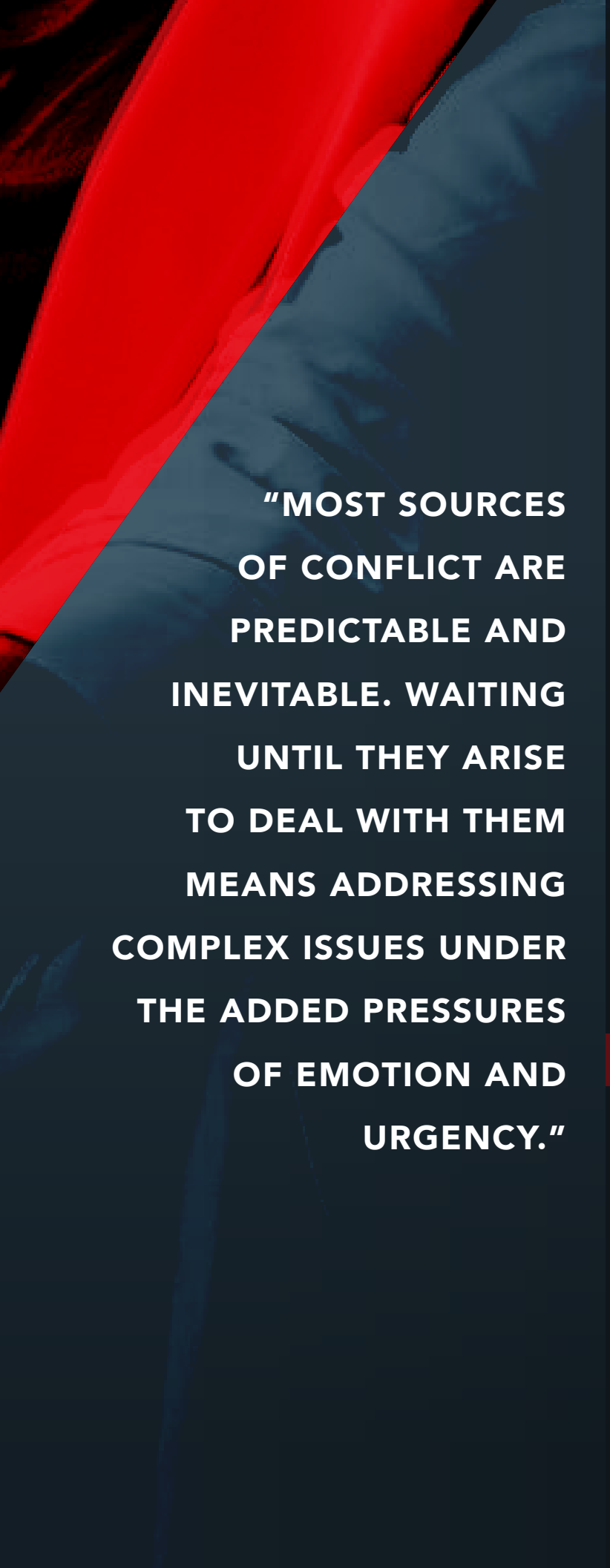
Brooke Goodman
Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority

Brooke Goodman is the Director of Collegiate Services at Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority. She previously worked at Villanova University, Boston College, and Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women. Brooke currently serves as Co-Editor of Perspectives for the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors.

DAN WRONA

THE CRUX OF COLLABORATION

ARE YOU A GOOD PARTNER?



"MOST SOURCES OF CONFLICT ARE PREDICTABLE AND INEVITABLE. WAITING UNTIL THEY ARISE TO DEAL WITH THEM MEANS ADDRESSING COMPLEX ISSUES UNDER THE ADDED PRESSURES OF EMOTION AND URGENCY."

At some point, you will become frustrated with your interfraternal partners. Campus professionals will experience an organization that ignores the university's carefully crafted expansion plan. Headquarters staff will chat with campus professionals who blame their students' problems on the organization. Volunteers will need to help undergraduates navigate an institution's violation of due process. Housing corporation leaders will work to prevent a chapter closure to protect their investment.

The immediate reaction is to blame, deflect, retaliate, label, get defensive, or become territorial:

- How dare they circumvent my plans?
- Why are they blaming me for their problems?
- They are being impossible. Let's just cut them out of the conversation and work around them.
- Isn't it cute how they think that's going to work?
- Who are they to tell me what to do? They don't know what they're talking about!
- How did they arrive at this decision? Are they incompetent or just naive?
- Don't they understand we have to collaborate?

Many of us have experienced these sentiments. While these reactions are understandable, they betray a lack of professionalism, an inability to handle difficult situations, and at worst, childish pettiness. Acting on these impulses will not solve problems, and will often make things worse. Interestingly, working more collaboratively does not begin with other stakeholders. It begins with us.

Collaborating with Stakeholders

The AFA Core Competencies work group, through its research and deliberation, identified the need to develop our abilities to collaborate across the interfraternal community. The description of this competency area makes a few important points:

> *"Fraternities and sororities are supported by a network of stakeholders who each have their own authority, perspective, priorities, and interest in the community"* *(Core Competencies Manual, 2018).*

Stakeholders are interdependent and interconnected. Each shares a portion of responsibility for supporting a community that is much larger than the area they serve. Whether a campus or inter/national

headquarters professional, inter/national volunteer, housing corporation or advisory board volunteer, alumnus, or vendor, no singular entity has complete ownership of fraternity/sorority life. No one has complete authority. Each has an interest in a subset of the fraternity/sorority community. Each stakeholder controls and influences a unique area of the community, and each stakeholder is essential to the community's health.

> *"Professionals who work with these organizations must take personal responsibility for working collaboratively with each stakeholder group…"*
>
> *(Core Competencies Manual, 2018).*

Interdependent and interconnected relationships are complex, so we must acknowledge that working together will not always be pretty. However, professionals have a responsibility to act collaboratively, even when it is difficult, and others are not cooperating. The onus is on the self, not the other.

> *"...in order to capitalize on shared interests and navigate conflicting priorities"*
>
> *(Core Competencies Manual, 2018).*

When they have common interests, stakeholders should work together toward the same goals. At other times priorities will be in conflict because the topic is not important to one stakeholder, because stakeholders approach the issue in different ways, or because they place different levels of importance on an issue. We must develop the ability to work together both when we are in alignment and in conflict.

While the Core Competencies further define the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that we should cultivate to develop in this area, there are a few simple things we can do to overcome the frustrations that arise from working together. Here's what it will take to work more professionally and constructively in this complex interpersonal environment.

Know your role.

Your authority is limited. While there are a few things under your direct and sole control, your responsibilities will almost always overlap with those of other stakeholders. There are also responsibilities in the fraternity/sorority community that fall outside the scope of your authority.

There will be temptations to make unilateral decisions, to design your own operating processes, or to create new policies to meet your needs. While these actions may make logical sense to you, they may overstep your authority, cut stakeholders out of the process, or create problems for others. As a result, you become the offending partner. Stakeholders will react with the same frustration you feel when they refuse to collaborate.

Examine your role and determine what falls within and outside your authority. If you see yourself as the savior, the dictator, the decider, or the expert in the situation, think again. You play a small role in the collective network of support for fraternity/sorority life. Other stakeholders play roles you cannot, so work to see the value of their capabilities and contributions.

See the position, not the person.

When a stakeholder's decisions become frustrating, resist the urge to make the fundamental attribution error, where we incorrectly assume someone's actions are a function of their character, rather than the situation.

Your perspective on fraternity/sorority life is shaped by your organization and position. Each stakeholder exists for a different purpose with its own operating philosophy, strategic objectives, measures of success, policies, and procedures. Since we serve different types of organizations with different purposes, we will naturally operate differently even when addressing the same problem. Membership organizations and universities have different legal responsibilities for behavior. The net benefits and costs of closing chapters are different for universities, organizations, and housing corporations. The conflicts that arise from working together have more to do with the role than the person in the role.

Examine the world through a stakeholder's eyes, and it will become clear their actions are not intended to slight you but to fulfill their philosophy, purpose, objectives, policies, or procedures.

Search for shared interests.

We share similar goals. So, why aren't we all working together in perfect harmony? The problem is that shared goals are not obvious on the surface.

Aligning around shared interests requires listening, understanding, and creativity. Housing corporations'

concerns about open beds may align with the university's interest in retention and academic performance. National officers' concerns about a university's fraternity/sorority culture may overlap with the goals of the alumni advisory council, the public relations office, residential life, and the neighborhood association. Development and alumni relations officers may have a shared interest with student conduct and public safety in managing tailgates. These opportunities emerge when we work to understand how fraternities and sororities impact other stakeholders, and what those stakeholders identify as top priorities.

Make it your personal mission to understand the goals, interests, and priorities of each stakeholder. Compare this to the goals, interests, and priorities of your role, and determine where there is overlap. When you take an idea or concern to another stakeholder, frame it according to their interests. Just because this is your top priority doesn't mean it is a priority for them, even if they agree it is important. Additionally, they may have priorities you should be working to address.

Preemptively manage pain points.

Most sources of conflict are predictable and inevitable. Waiting until they arise to deal with them means addressing complex issues under the added pressures of emotion and urgency. This can exacerbate problems and damage relationships.

Good partners do not wait until a crisis to address potential sources of conflict. They anticipate issues and work to resolve them in advance. Work with your stakeholders to determine how to handle predictable situations such as:

- Timelines and expectations for expansion
- Lack of follow through on commitments made during expansion
- Treating conduct problems as individual, versus organizational issues
- Conflicting conduct findings, especially concerning chapter closure
- Violations of due process rights
- Responsibility for alumni influence and behavior
- Policies that overstep, contradict, or conflict
- Expectations for members and chapters

Forecast the year ahead and determine where you anticipate conflict. Start a conversation with stakeholders and work to develop mutual expectations and strategies. You may not come to perfect agreement, so at minimum work to understand how they will make decisions and prepare your game plan accordingly. Starting the relationship with mutual understanding reduces the potential for fallout and preserves future relationships.

Listen.

You are not the only expert. In fact, it is impossible for one person to have as much expertise and talent as the collective network of fraternity/sorority alumni, volunteers, and professionals.

Through my consulting and curriculum design work, I have spent several hundred hours interviewing alumni, volunteer advisors, trustees, staff across multiple departments, development officers, neighbors, and law enforcement officers. Some brilliant observations and recommendations have emerged. I am always amazed to hear no one has ever asked their opinions in the same way. It is more common for professionals to walk in with their predetermined solutions, listening only to respond.

Pretend you are the consultant, and conduct a thorough and strategic listening campaign. Spend your next 30 days reaching out, and interviewing at least 60 people. Incorporate as many perspectives as possible, including parents, alumni, neighbors, faculty, and board members. Ask a few simple questions: what do you see, what do you need, and what do you think we should do? Listen carefully, suspend judgement, and ask follow up questions in search of deeper understanding of the world through their eyes.

Get close.

The need to work with stakeholders will not go away. Continuous sparring will only create more frustration. Learning how to live and work together will require embracing and leaning into the difficulty.

Given the rate of turnover among fraternity/sorority volunteers and professionals, many of these stakeholders will outlast you. Even if you leave, you will almost certainly run into these people again. They will switch between campus, headquarters, and vendor roles. You will co-facilitate programs, serve on committees together, become coworkers two jobs

from now, supervise one another either in professional or volunteer roles, serve as references for one another, and see one another at conferences. When you apply for your next job, their colleagues will call your last supervisor to ask about you.

Treat each stakeholder relationship as if it will be a deep, permanent, direct, personal connection. Share more information, not less. Add them to all invitations. Ask for their help on special projects. Meet on personal time outside your roles. Ask their opinion, even if you think you know the answer or if it won't influence the situation. You are laying the foundation for their relationship with you and with your successors long after you are gone.

Find comfort in conflict.

Conflict is inevitable and necessary. Avoiding conflict only makes it worse and ignores the reality of the interconnected and interdependent relationships in fraternity/sorority work.

People avoid conflict in many ways, both consciously and subconsciously. They hesitate to make decisions for fear of how people will react. They cut difficult people out of the circle. They withhold information to avoid potential backlash. They tiptoe into, or around, difficult conversations and never deal with the primary problem. They downplay a situation rather than confronting it. They put things off for weeks, months, semesters, or years. Rather than facing the problem, they politic, maneuver, or manipulate their way around it.These examples of conflict represent opportunities for progress more than they represent threats. The more we avoid them, the more powerless we become.

The more you embrace conflict, the easier it becomes. This is not to suggest picking fights for the sake of conflict, but rather putting the proverbial elephant on the table and asserting the conversations that stand in the way of progress. Ask difficult questions. Make it easier to ask difficult questions by framing them as dumb questions. Study skills for negotiation, accountability, mediation, and facilitation. Seek out contradiction and pushback. Invite naysayers into the conversation, and argue it out.

Move past the hurt.

You will get burned, even if you do everything right. Being wronged brings up emotions that must be dealt with to continue working with those who wronged you, and to avoid ruining other relationships. The experience of being wronged can stick with you for a long time. Failing to deal with it completely can influence relationships with other stakeholders. You might assume all situations will be handled the same way, or that all campuses/organizations are like that campus/organization. You may be hesitant to trust other stakeholders. You may be more reluctant to share information or engage partners in a project. Holding onto these attitudes will make it more difficult for others to see you as a worthy partner.

Treat the situation as a learning experience. It is one play in a larger game or one scene in a larger story. Reflect on how the situation evolved. Compare and contrast how the situation may differ from others that worked out better. Ask others for their input. Talk to a mentor or colleague who can help make sense of the situation, especially if that person will be brutally honest. Do what you can to re-establish a working relationship, and try again. It is surprising how past fallouts can lead to mutual respect and understanding.

Collaborating with stakeholders takes time and effort, and becoming a better partner is challenging and personal work. We need to know everyone's place, see one another as partners, listen, get close, get uncomfortable, and work through the problem.

This may be the most difficult, most rewarding, and most important work we do as fraternity/sorority professionals. It is not, "until death do us part." Even after we leave our current roles, our legacy and relationships are permanently intertwined in the fraternity/sorority support network. The future of fraternity/sorority life relies on our ability to work productively together across organizations and departments as much as it relies on student decisions. Anything less than this is a disservice to our students and our partners.

AUTHOR BIO

Dan Wrona
RISE Partnerships

Dan Wrona is CEO and Project Leader of RISE Partnerships. He has provided training and consulting on more than 200 campuses, and contributes his expertise in instructional design, strategy, systems-thinking, risk prevention, and culture change to advance fraternity/sorority life.

A COMMON PURPOSE

THE GROWTH OF FRATERNITY

JASON H. NOLEN-DOERR, J.D.

In Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton, a recurring theme surrounds 'the room where it happened' where key decisions are made. In the musical, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton meet privately to reach a compromise that ultimately shapes the future of the country. This scenario is common throughout fraternal history—a number of people come together around shared values before running forward to create organizations that would withstand war, economic turmoil, social divide, and rising costs of an undergraduate education. It is this history that can provide a blueprint of how to approach the conundrum of open expansion within a local Interfraternity Council.

In my time at the North American Interfraternity Conference, I spent countless hours working with campus and headquarters professionals equally frustrated over whether the campus should allow an additional NIC-affiliated organization to join the community. Each of these conversations played out in similar fashion:

Campus-based professional: This fraternity wants to be on our campus, but we cannot support another organization. There is no data suggesting an unmet need among men in the student community. Our IFC is not supportive of adding another organization. Where will they live? I do not have time to help them be successful…

Headquarters professional: It is our right to be on that campus, and the IFC should be following the NIC Standards regarding open expansion. Adding another fraternity will only strengthen their community. Each inter/national organization should explain to their undergraduate members the importance of supporting expansion. We already have men on the campus who want to join our organization. In fact, I initiated a group of ten last week…

Something interesting when comparing these viewpoints is the common thread woven throughout. Both professionals want the best experience for the undergraduate member, and both believe they are doing so in their actions. When thinking about the notion of the room where it happened, this common thread, or value, becomes the foundation for the most effective approach toward open expansion. An approach built on compromise, uniting through common values, and strategizing for mutual success.

For me, "the room where it happened" was a simple hotel meeting room in Fort Worth during the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors. After having dinner with fraternity executives to discuss their interest in a particular campus, we met together with the campus. The group talked through campus dynamics, projected timelines, and organization-specific needs with the expansion effort. We discussed the campus' hesitation, the organizations' levels of ongoing support, and the role of the IFC. Most importantly, we shared a common goal of building the fraternity community in an intentional manner to foster long term success.

This meeting resonates because of the care each organization and campus professional demonstrated for each other. They listened to the time sensitive needs of the organizations with upcoming anniversaries, and key campus events that would facilitate alumni involvement for the new fraternity. Organizational executives took notes as the campus professionals painted a picture of the ideal recruitment scenario that would enable engagement with the unaffiliated student population. I challenged everyone to enter the conversation with an open mind and willingness to compromise. They exceeded these expectations and emerged with a plan for the organization to join the campus community in a time that aligned with their individual needs while acknowledging the campus professional's need to build support across the campus.

The one group missing from this room where it happened were the IFC leaders. We can think of these men as the Aaron Burr of the situation. In Hamilton, Burr is not around when the great compromise between Jefferson, Adams, and Hamilton is reached in the back room of a tavern. Instead, he is left to provide the narration and animated facial expressions of being "left out," before vowing to eventually be in the room where it happens. IFC leaders may feel this frustration when impactful community decisions are made with little to no consideration for their perspectives. Yet, this frustration can be mitigated with the care of the campus professional.

Sometimes, undergraduate leaders will respond to outside perspectives. While they are simply repeating what the campus professional has been saying for months, the external reinforcement can be received as highly credible information. However, there is one key advantage the campus professional has over outside perspective, an intimate understanding of the campus dynamic. In the previously discussed scenario the IFC leaders are absent, but their perspective is not. The campus professional had a unique opportunity to return to campus, demonstrate advocacy efforts for the existing fraternities, and paint a picture for what a future with more organizations could look like on campus. Effective advocates must be prepared to address the fear of reduced recruitment numbers that is often a primary concern among IFC leaders. A simple illustration of the disparity between the number of affiliated and unaffiliated men can enable logic to diminish the fear.

While the campus professional must work to establish support on campus, the headquarters professionals must similarly take steps to prepare for the future. Headquarters staff should strive to maintain ongoing communication, especially in the immediate lead up to any on-campus expansion effort. This ensures a mutually agreeable timeline and other details remain sensical. For example, if the initial meeting outlined a timeline where an organization would join the community annually, it is a best practice to engage throughout the semester prior to the expansion to assess whether the timeline is still viable based on any changes in the environment. The headquarters staff must be nimble to adjust to any changing dynamics.

All professionals should maintain an open mind that there may be emerging interest groups at any point during the projected timeline. It is nearly impossible to predict the flow of undergraduate interest in a world where one day Snapchat is king but then deleted after a questionable update. If student generated interest arises, then professionals should reconvene to discuss how to best support the students in their freedom of choice and assembly. If an intentional interest group where interest is influenced by a professional arises, then a much larger conversation, rooted in accountability, should take place between the campus, organizations involved, and the NIC. Ultimately, a quality undergraduate experience should remain the common goal, but care must be given to maintain equity and fairness in access.

As professionals in the fraternity and sorority industry, we are all partners in cultivating the undergraduate experience. At the headquarters, we are thinking about the experience of our members on a global level. On campus, we are considering how the experiences in each represented organization impacts the overall community. When we partner, rather than sit isolated and frustrated, we are able to create experiences like the example referenced earlier. This dynamic is transferable beyond the conversations around expansion. Our common goal of ensuring that undergraduates have access to meaningful and developmental experiences should lie at the heart of every conversation. If we can create more opportunities to unite in our common mission, we just might find the room where it happens that solves the challenge of open expansion, or better yet, the myriad challenges facing our entire community.

"OUR COMMON GOAL OF ENSURING THAT UNDERGRADUATES HAVE ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL AND DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES SHOULD LIE AT THE HEART OF EVERY CONVERSATION."

AUTHOR BIO

Jason H. Nolen-Doerr, J.D.
Northeastern University

Jason H. Nolen-Doerr, J.D. currently serves as the Director for the Center of Student Involvement at Northeastern University and as the Grand Marshal within the Grand Council of Alpha Sigma Phi. Prior to joining the Northeastern family, Jason served as President of Indy Pride, Director of Campus Initiatives for the North-American Interfraternity Conference, Coordinator of Fraternity/Sorority Life at Murray State University, and the Assistant Director of Expansion and Growth for Alpha Sigma Phi.

YOU CANNOT DO IT ALONE: HOW WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER

HARRIETTE BAKER / KAHLIN MCKEOWN

Given the variety and number of constituency groups in the fraternity and sorority industry, the terms "partnership" and "collaboration" are used frequently. Collaboration between campuses and inter/national organizations is a necessary element to successfully move chapters and communities forward. In the wake of current community crisis, testing, modeling and authentically seeking partnership and collaboration with one another is necessary. However, the ongoing conversation and debate among fraternity and sorority professionals about who is "taking the lead" in the partnership and collaboration process and whether college/university entities are truly working toward the same goals as inter/national organizations is a present tension each time we end up on the other side of the phone. As professionals, it is important to reflect on our experiences when collaboration works well just as often as we vent when it falls short.

This article is centered on knowledge that was gained from first-hand experience where a campus and inter/national headquarters were able to collaborate in their support and redirection of a chapter. To provide some context, the chapter we will refer to was on both the international organization's radar and the university's radar for a few years, but there had not been substantial, intentional, collaborative interventions for the chapter in the recent past. When the chapter had a large incident involving new members and alcohol, an opportunity was presented for the international organization and campus to truly collaborate and construct a joint plan of action. Post-incident, the chapter has made significant progress with their new member program, chapter culture, and risk management. Although the incident itself was not positive, it provided an opportunity to establish a supportive relationship to train, coach, and refocus the chapter for the good of the community.

The almost two-year targeted intervention led to several important insights and strategies to consider when collaborating between campuses and headquarters. As we each reflect on our time as partners, these themes and commitments seem to stand out as the professional practices that strengthened our work as a team and ultimately contributed to our successful partnership.

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

Problems can be difficult to identify. It can also be difficult to agree on what the problem actually is in a given scenario or incident instead of simply identifying symptoms of a root problem. Being clear and willing to acknowledge there is a collective problem can lay groundwork for productive partnership and collaboration. When working with someone, especially outside of your immediate day-to-day scope of work (e.g., a campus professional and a headquarters professional) it is critical to respect the identified problem may look different from each vantage point. It may take context and understanding of the history of the community or organization to establish your point of view before moving forward. For example, we first had to recognize our policies and measured standards of achievement were different. It's difficult to attempt to fix something if you aren't clear about what you are trying to address in the first place. It is imperative both parties genuinely share an investment in addressing the problem before creating a plan of action.

ASSUME POSITIVE INTENT.

Working in fraternity and sorority life is a difficult job. It would be hard to believe folks in this industry are solely setting out to make other professional's lives more complicated through their interactions and communication. Therefore, it is important to approach partnerships assuming others want to work toward positive change. Often, we misinterpret our colleagues' lack of understanding, response, or expressed interest for defensiveness, difficulty, or ill-will. Each party must trust that although we may have different vehicles for getting to the same goal, given the potential limitations of the institution or organization, we are committed to action and partnership. It is easy to write one another off as less committed or invested when you approach the situation with emotions from past partnerships gone wrong. A commitment to assuming at every onset each party only wants to see a positive outcome creates a solid foundation from which to work.

COMMUNICATION.

Open and honest communication truly contributed to the success we experienced through our collaboration. Cliche, right? Admittedly, the two of us share a very similar advising style. Recognizing our similar approach was helpful in developing a partnership and helpful in building trust. From the beginning, we established phone check-ins, asked questions via email when clarification was necessary, and were transparent with one another about our priorities and job responsibilities outside of the project. We remained on the same page about the progress and setbacks the chapter experienced month-to-month and how both the university and the international organization's support would vary while contributing to this chapter's intervention and ultimate improvement. It is also important to communicate about realities of campus and organizational culture that affect the way we each want to address different aspects of our work. We ultimately allow room in a collaboration for doubt and misunderstanding when we fail to communicate and take into account potential hindrances from both the aspects of campus culture and of organizational reality that could also impede progress. Communicating about the realities we were both experiencing helped facilitate a plan that resonated with students, made sense for the organization, and was also in line with all parties' priorities.

SUPPORT FROM ALL ANGLES.

One of the most critical aspects of our partnership was truly having each other's best interests at heart and wanting what was best for the students. We each provided a high level of support for the chapter officers, advisors, and others working with the chapter. In practice, it was as simple as a quick email or text giving heads up that a student was "coming in hot" over something that had just transpired, providing copy of communication to one another before sharing with the students, and maybe most importantly, sharing small wins with one another along the way. Providing support for the students and backing one another up was critical for success. It can be tempting to agree with a student when they lament about how strict the campus or inter/national organization is being. But in this instance, partnership allowed us to be so much more than "good cop, bad cop," and support one another. While there may be nothing innovative about copying one another on emails or sending encouraging words of support - we feel it made all the difference in our commitment to an unfiltered collaboration.

BE REALISTIC.

A lot can change in a year's time, but a lot can also remain the same. In this instance, it was crucial for the longevity of our intervention to be realistic about the time true progress would take and to craft realistic goals for this chapter to meet that appealed to the university's priorities and those of the international organization. From the beginning, we worked together to provide context about the campus culture and chapter environment and then worked to create incremental goals that could be measured, documented, and celebrated along the way. Additionally, the flexibility in our approach with the chapter, from both the international organization and the university, made this experience feel different. If something isn't working, make a change. If a volunteer or an advisor isn't a good fit for the chapter, work to find someone who is. Waiting for the next election cycle or for a new program or intervention to become available was not an option. We were going to turn and tune the dials until we found a balance and approach that had the group back on course. We didn't live in fear of the "other." Our focus was on a lasting and continued partnership to support a chapter that may always struggle with the unique and risky effects of their culture. Approaching this partnership in a realistic, grounded way allowed both of us to feel like we were making progress without attempting to accomplish too much too quickly.

Collaboration can be challenging, tiring, and a lot more work than doing something alone. Trying to change a culture together meant there would be nobody but us to blame in the end if we didn't end up moving the needle. While we certainly acknowledge the students' role in actively participating in our partnership and ultimately accepting the support and assistance being offered as part of their own success, as professionals we cannot allow their willingness to let us off the hook. When partnership and collaboration are established, modeled, and strategically carried out, we have the ability to move the needle together.

QUESTIONS TO CLEAR THE AIR:

- **How would you prefer to receive communication?**
- **What issues, topics and concerns would you like to be included on?**
- **What and how should I be including or sharing with the chapter advisor or other volunteers?**
- **What are the current priorities/areas of interest for your department/organization?**
- **Where do you feel you might have limited control or influence that I might be able to assist with?**
- **What are peak times of your semester that I might anticipate a slower turn-around time or response?**

AUTHOR BIOS

Harriette Baker
Phi Sigma Sigma

Harriette Baker is the Prevention Specialist at Phi Sigma Sigma, where she is responsible for the Fraternity's education, accountability and safety initiatives. She is a former fraternity/sorority advisor and active volunteer in the area of harm reduction and risk management. Harriette earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas Tech University where she was initiated into Zeta Tau Alpha.

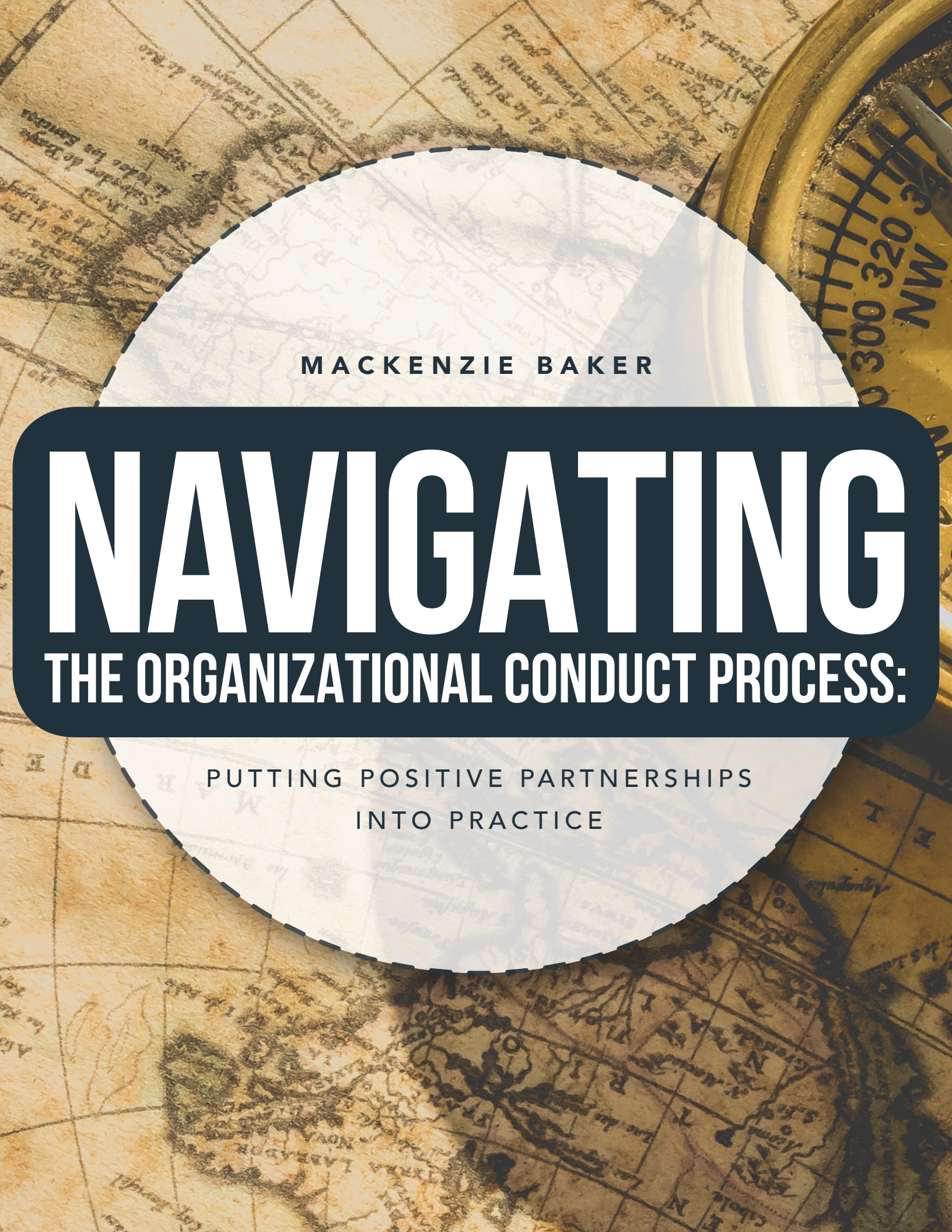
Kahlin McKeown
University of Maryland

Kahlin McKeown currently serves as the Assistant Director of Alumni Relations for the College of Education at the University of Maryland, and she is also a student in the Student Affairs Ph.D. program at UMD. Her research interests include sorority womens' experiences and the socialization of fraternity/sorority professionals. Kahlin worked as a fraternity/sorority advisor for six years, and is a member of and active volunteer for Alpha Xi Delta.

COMING SOON

AFA HAS A NEW LOOK

AFA1976.ORG



MACKENZIE BAKER

NAVIGATING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONDUCT PROCESS:

PUTTING POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS INTO PRACTICE

Imagine the feeling in your gut when an email slides into your inbox with high importance; a chapter you work with has allegedly violated an institutional policy and has been referred to the conduct or community standards office for adjudication. Do you feel the worry about how you'll manage this? The dread of having to call a campus partner to share the bad news? The guilt knowing you have too much on your plate and won't be able to be the best partner possible? You might be reminded of the previous conduct issues with this chapter or shocked by the allegations against a high functioning chapter.

Today's landscape calls for us to be courageous and collaborative. It calls for us to be competent in conduct processes and policies, and restorative in how we work with students to inspire meaningful change they believe in. Being courageous means navigating complex relationships and influencing within our institution to establish collaborative processes. There's little room for error if we believe in preserving fraternities and sororities on college campuses; the climate requires us to get it right the first time. When we don't get it right, fraternity and sorority existence is quickly called into question.

Sometimes "getting it right" means moving swiftly while balancing several chapter issues simultaneously. How do we slow down, step back, and think about long-term success and sustainability? Are we reducing the risk of something similar happening again in the future, or are we just getting through this moment and current crisis? There isn't always a perfect or obvious solution, but before we can be successful in creating meaningful change, we must prioritize cultivating and maintaining relationships with stakeholders.

WHAT'S YOUR APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIPS?

Forming partnerships with stakeholder groups extends beyond how one shows up during a crisis, investigation, or organizational conduct process. Before we can address what we do in that moment, each team, department, and organization must decide what kind of partner they will be. Institutions and organizations must identify what they stand to gain from having a coordinated approach to partnerships. Then, they must develop a team, including organizational leadership, that buys into this approach.

From an inter/national organizational standpoint, institutional partnerships are key to continued operation and must be respected and valued. Within the landscape of the institution, teams with better partnerships have stronger chapters and communities. We see more engaged students who have a sense of responsibility to their institutions and organizations and make better choices in the long run. Campuses who choose to partner with organizations may find increased accountability for university-issued outcomes and a reinforcement of not only policies, but a values-based approach to the membership experience.

I'm fortunate to have inherited an organizational approach that works. The organization I work for believes in a hands-on approach with students, volunteers, and institutional staff in the conduct process. This lends to trust and credibility, allowing for a more collaborative outcome that meets the needs of all parties involved, particularly the students.

Developing an organizational approach to partnerships means finding the courage to call out when things aren't working. This can begin in two ways: first, look at your department's strategic plan or blueprint. If you have goals for the next 3-7 years, partnerships with your organizations/institutions should be highlighted. It is the foundation for accomplishing goals and holding the team accountable to a culture of collaboration. Second, look at your individual goals as a fraternity/sorority professional. Each year when I assess progress during my annual review, my supervisor and I talk about the quantity and quality of our partnerships with institutional stakeholders. Every year I challenge myself personally to increase my effectiveness and intentionality in this area. In the last year, it has become clear partnerships exclusively with fraternity/sorority advisors is no longer going to get us where we need to be ... the relationships must extend to all areas of the institution.

COMMITTING TO OUR APPROACH

After establishing the need to do something differently, the true work begins. When crisis hits and we need to mobilize quickly, we must be ready to follow through on previous commitments.

In 2018, the Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA) and the Fraternity Executives Association (FEA) developed the "Communication and Collaboration Guidance for Inter/National Fraternal Organizations and Campus Student Conduct Professionals." This resource offers recommendations for how institutions and professionals create and manage their conduct processes for fraternities and sororities. For many of us, we'll read through the guide and realize each successful conduct process in our past has followed most, if not all, these guidelines. To execute strong partnerships, we first need to re-examine our process and this guide can be used as a roadmap.

A defined and visible conduct process that acknowledges the varying perspectives, priorities, and interests in the outcome is where we begin. Once our approach is set and our process is solid, fraternity/sorority professionals must be willing to reflect on how they show up in these moments. We need to be willing to ask the question, how do we bring our students and stakeholders along in this process for maximum buy-in and long-term, sustainable change? And, how can I be my best in this process?

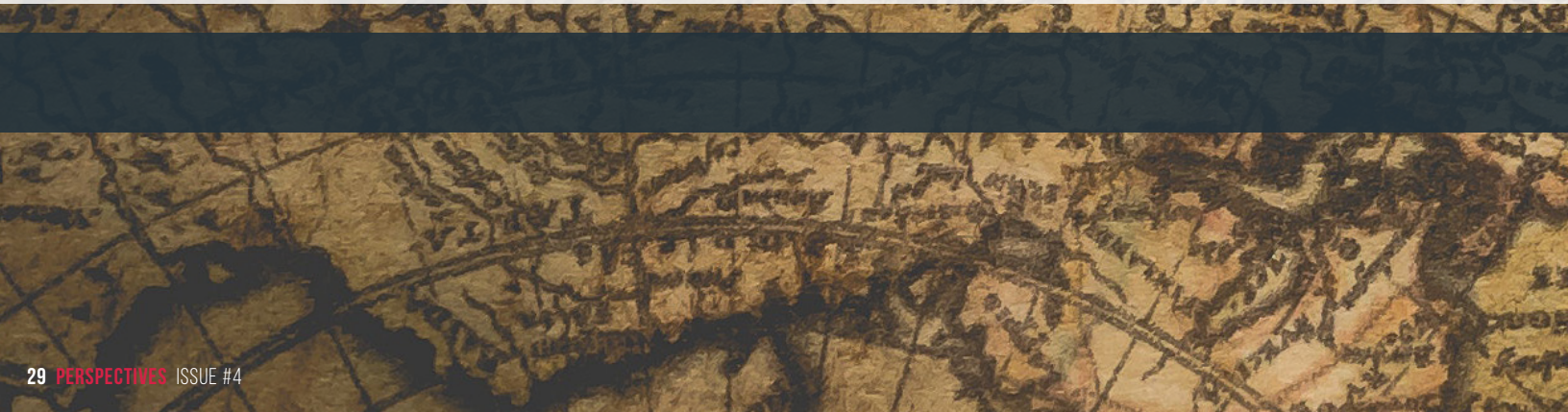
EXECUTING OUR APPROACH, TOGETHER

It's natural to think about what organizational staff can do for institutions in conduct processes and vice versa. As I reviewed the ASCA/FEA recommendations again recently, it stuck out to me that the commitments for inter/national organizations nearly mirrored the commitments suggested for institutions. We both need to be willing to invest in the same level of cooperation and partnership. It's more than a task list of who does what, it's how you choose to show up that will define our success.

For all professionals involved in this process, the choices we make early will be critical in facilitating a positive outcome at the end. Things move quickly, but should not move so quickly that we are not able to communicate with institutional or organizational counterparts in advance of more widespread communication. As the ASCA/FEA guide points out, at the minimum a carbon copy is appropriate, but a phone call will set the tone and expectation moving forward. A phone call sends the message, "I want us both to be involved, please keep me in the loop and I will do the same." It is your first and sometimes only opportunity to prove your partnership.

Know your people. Maintain organized lists of your point-of-contact at each institution or organization. Although this sounds basic, it falls through the cracks often. Your contact is going to have a different title across varying entities; website staff directories should be clear and accurate on who handles what. This enables us all to communicate with the right person in a timely manner. Make sure these lists are easily accessible to any staff member that would need them, including future staff members should you leave the institution or organization. Your ability to mobilize the right people quickly starts the process on a positive path and reduces complexity.

When I think about how to approach partnerships with conduct professionals, the most obvious and effective strategy is to check our own defensiveness. Successful partnerships in the conduct process require us to face the difficult reality and facts. Allowing someone else to be right is key in this process and both an institutional staff member and an organizational staff member or volunteer has valuable experience to add to this conversation. Let's face it, if we're in this current position, something has happened that needs to be acknowledged and



addressed. Professionals must be willing to put aside their personal agendas. Focusing on gathering the facts will allow you to avoid defensiveness and prioritize the shared goals of the process.

Communicate limitations from the first interaction but challenge yourself on these boundaries, too. Are these boundaries reasonable and why do you have them? If our end goal is to make positive behavior change with our students, do these boundaries help us get there or are they are barrier? These are all questions we should ask ourselves every time we become involved in a fraternity/sorority conduct case. If we can first challenge our own limitations, external stakeholders will be much less likely to.

Making a phone call means delivering on the commitment to partnership and being ready to do what's right for the stakeholders and students involved. One of my most memorable phone calls was with a campus staff member who first asked, "If we weren't involved, how would your organization be reacting?" If we're truly looking for partnership, there is value in always asking this question, listening intently, and being willing to adjust based on the answer. Proactively, this requires us to look for trends and take responsibility if our process alienates stakeholders early on and the damage that can cause.

Engage local advisors early on and they will be your champion. They know these students better than most of us. Professionals need to consider how we can bring local advisors along early and often. Within our organization, we work to identify ways we can reinforce the mindset that our local advisors are an extension of the Fraternity rather than the local chapter. We leverage communication strategies in the conduct process to generate their buy-in and support. When we do this, we reduce the likelihood of inconsistent messages and de-motivating advisor presence.

Be clear about possible outcomes. As reiterated in the ASCA/FEA guidance, if suspension or separation from the institution is on the table for the allegation at hand, we all need to know that early on. This will greatly impact the support fraternity/sorority professionals give their students and how they will guide them. With limited resources, this level of transparency helps us make informed decisions about where and to what extent we need to shift our focus.

When I think about what it means to "get it right" in the organizational conduct process, I think about the opportunities to share a process with a stakeholder and make long-term impact on the experience of our chapters. This comes to life when we witness a chapter president represent their organization with professionalism and awareness and we see chapters embrace conduct outcomes and make positive changes in the experience. The organizational conduct process can be a powerful space to develop our core competencies as professionals. Showing up as partners in the conduct process gives us, as fraternity/sorority professionals, the chance to put our fears, egos, and agendas aside to advocate for the student experience together.

AUTHOR BIO

Mackenzie Baker
Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women

Mackenzie Baker has served on staff for Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women since 2014, currently in the role of Assistant Director of Chapter Development. She holds a master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of South Carolina and is an initiate of Sigma Delta Tau at Eastern Michigan University.

DONALD ABELS

SAME TEAM MENTALITY

THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS AND CAMPUS CONDUCT STAFF WHEN ADDRESSING ORGANIZATIONAL MISCONDUCT

Collaboration in the area of fraternity/sorority alleged misconduct is an important issue and not a new conversation.

During a recent external review/campus consultation visit, a senior level administrator asked, "At what point do we say enough is enough and stop trying to partner with fraternity headquarters on chapter conduct matters?" Being familiar with the campus culture and operations, I responded with the question, "What parties are involved in the partnership?"

The response: "Student conduct staff and HQ staff."

The missing link in this scenario is the campus fraternity/sorority advisor. It would be naive to assume this question is unique to a particular campus. Over time, many universities have intentionally moved away from conduct models that rely on the campus fraternity/sorority advisor to investigate and adjudicate fraternity/sorority misconduct. The intention of this shift was for the role of the fraternity/sorority advisor to serve as both a support system and an advocate.

While the reason for this shift was relevant then and is still relevant today, the fact is, a true partnership does not work in isolation. With all of the stakeholders involved in fraternities and sororities, working to address issues of alleged misconduct continues to become more complex.

Strong working partnerships between inter/national organizations and host institutions are essential; however, these strong partnerships cannot exist without a collaborative relationship between the campus fraternity/sorority advisors and student conduct administrators.

MAKING THE CASE

Put simply, if a fraternity or sorority has been through a university conduct process and the fraternity/sorority advisor did not have a seat at the table, the process is broken and change is needed.

Thompson and Perry (2006) share:

> *When advocating for change, buy-in is necessary. Collaboration is when everybody brings something to the table (expertise, money, ability to grant permission). They put it on the table, take their hands off, and then the team creates from there. [It] is transforming in the sense that you don't leave the same way you came in. There's some sort of change. You give up part of yourself. Something new has to be created. Something happens differently because of the process.*

This is a beautiful concept when viewed through the lens of fraternity/sorority and student conduct. Now, more than ever, the need for intentional collaboration on issues of organizational misconduct is crucial. The age of organizational isolation is dead.

BEING A CONNECTOR

Determining who is in a unique position to assist in addressing issues of organizational misconduct should not be a difficult task; however, challenging conventional wisdom can be daunting.

In his book, The Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell uses the term "connector" to describe individuals within an organization with multiple ties to different networks of people. Gladwell suggests it is not the number of people the connector knows; rather it is their ability to link people, ideas, and resources. Connectors are crucial facilitators when it comes to collaboration (Ibarra & Morten, 2011).

When viewing collaboration through a connector lens, it becomes much easier to uncover myths of conventional wisdom, and to identify the ways in which both fraternity/sorority advisors and student conduct administrators are uniquely positioned to address organizational misconduct.

Student Conduct Administrator:

- Local, state, and federal law and how these issues affect higher education
- Institution policy, code of conduct, student rights and responsibilities
- Due process within the organizational conduct process
- Expertise in the subject matter
- National trends in the area of student conduct
- Matters of past precedent

Fraternity/Sorority Advisor:

- Points of contact for headquarters staff
- Office policies, inter/national organization policies, council policies
- Ability to assist in creating meaningful and effective sanctions (symptom vs problem analysis)
- National trends in the area of the fraternal industry
- Community insight and knowledge – ability to help connect dots related to:
  - Membership statistics trends
  - Chapter GPA trends, specifically new member trends
  - Social events or other high risk activities within the community
  - Helpful investigation tips, such as types of questions to ask specific organizations, student leaders with strong moral compass

Fraternities and sororities are complex organizations that exist in an even more complex system. Therefore, cookie-cutter techniques and sanctions often fall short in addressing underlying factors causing the issue. Student conduct administrators are uniquely positioned to document, execute, and track sanctions and outcomes, whereas, fraternity/sorority advisors are uniquely positioned to provide context and add nuance in assisting the development of individualized outcomes that address the behavior.

Utilizing a care and concern approach provides an opportunity for fraternity/sorority advisors to play a valuable role in the conduct process, specifically when it comes to chapter investigations. If a case were to be hazing related, the student conduct administrator might be best positioned to meet with the alleged parties per the investigation process, while the fraternity/sorority advisor has a unique opportunity to meet with the alleged victims, such as new members prior to the formal investigation beginning. Care and concern is an important component often left out of the investigation processes, especially when interim suspensions or no-contact orders are in place between initiated members and new members.

Not only does the care and concern approach provide space for the fraternity/sorority advisor to serve as a support system during times of distress for students, but it is also an opportunity to assess the situation through body language, questions asked, and information shared. All of which can be extremely helpful information for the investigation team.

ADDRESSING THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

There is likely a reason for the lack of collaboration between student conduct offices and fraternity and sorority offices. It could simply be a lack of effort to work as a team. Other common reasons include lack of trust, disjointed conceptions of the problem, or even misconceptions of what the other stakeholders believe or desire (Grey, 1987). Somewhere along the way, professionals have directly or indirectly encountered negative partnership experiences that create trust issues, and other barriers for future partnerships. Before throwing in the towel, and assuming the student conduct administrator is unwilling to collaborate, start building trust by acknowledging obstacles and hesitations.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Relationships Matter: The one thing every relationship must have in order to survive is trust. It is harder to hate people close up (Brown, 2017, p.84). The same is true for negative assumptions. It is easy to assume negative intentions from a distance. Until rapport is built and the foundation of a relationship is established, we will never move past assumptions.

Opportunities to build positive relations across departments are no different than making the effort to get to know a new staff member. Whatever the strategy to build relations, it is important for both sides to take an opportunity to be vulnerable by sharing concerns related to fraternity and sorority conduct matters. This will allow for honest dialogue and idea sharing on how said matters can be addressed through a collaborative approach.

An effective way to build working relationships, and to ensure transparency, is to have a recurring meeting with those who have a role in fraternity/sorority conduct. Depending on the staffing structure at an institution, this could be done differently. However, the goal is to be transparent and to break down any power dynamics. For example, if the staffing model for the fraternity/sorority office consists of a director and multiple council advisors, each of these individuals are positioned to add value to the team. While only having input from the director, or a single council advisor, may make sense when considering ways to maximize time, such a model drastically minimizes the benefit diverse perspectives provide.

Reporting: With increased media attention, campus awareness, and education efforts, one should be prepared for reports related to fraternity/sorority behavior. Such reports may come from campus partners, community members, parents/families, peers, or general observers. While we know increased reporting is typically a positive sign, indicating heightened awareness of the problem and lower levels of tolerance, it is crucial any and all parties receiving reports are trained and capable of handling such information appropriately.

Reports of alleged misconduct will likely go to the fraternity/sorority office from a concerned parent or community member, bypassing the student conduct office. Therefore, having protocol in place is crucial. Important things to consider when developing reporting protocol include:

- How to properly respond to reports made over the phone
  - Provide training to student workers or office managers on important questions to ask, information to write down, and who to direct the call to
- Online and anonymous reporting
  - Who receives notification of report
  - What are the steps taken upon receipt
  - What is the duty to care

Among the various methods of reporting, anonymous reporting is becoming more common within higher education. Despite increased popularity, it is not uncommon for a campus to face roadblocks due to institutional practices that prevent student conduct administrators from further investigating by method of interview if an anonymous report provides limited basis for a case, or does not entail sufficient information.

While this practice creates significant issues for conduct administrators in their legal duty to care, this is where assistance from the fraternity/sorority advisor can be beneficial. Since student conduct administrators may not be in a position to gather additional information on an anonymous report, the fraternity/sorority advisor is in a unique position to help fill in gaps. This can be accomplished by contacting new members to check in on their first semester of college, and their new member experience. If the advisor utilizes the right questions, this can be of tremendous value for the student conduct administrator in following up on alleged violations, especially when determining if a report warrants further investigation.

Other important types of reports include campus police reports, campus alcohol transports, and residence hall reports. If an institution has a partnership with a local or campus police department, the fraternity/sorority advisor should be on a first name basis with police department officials. Chances are, all student related reports are making their way to an administrator's inbox, and the staff member responsible for one of the highest risk student populations on a college campus should be included in this communication.

Communication and Information Sharing: As with any group, team, or organization, communication is key. Considerations for creating preferred methods of communication should consist of the following:

- Identify the direct contact for chapter officers, advisors, and headquarters staff, regarding alleged organizational misconduct.
- Identify the staff member responsible for oversight of organizational sanctions.
- Create a communication plan for notifying headquarters staff.

Both fraternity/sorority advisors and student conduct administrators should understand when and what information should be shared. Easy access to important information is crucial to both parties, such as:

- Membership rosters and the ability to track roster changes
- Event registration details
- Historical context of specific events and activities
- Investigative summaries and findings

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

It is time to rethink what advocacy and support looks like as fraternity/sorority advisors. At the end of the day, the purpose of fraternity/sorority advisors and student conduct administrators is to provide support and advocate for positive experiences for all students. It is time to stop hiding behind the good cop vs. bad cop façade, and do what needs to be done to change culture and create safe and healthy communities. Working in silos will continue to have negative implications on the organizations in desperate need of a system that works to create holistic change. Administrators must stop making excuses and pointing fingers. It is time to join forces and play a part in fixing what is broken. This starts by having a "same team" mentality.

" WORKING IN SILOS WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS ON THE ORGANIZATIONS IN DESPERATE NEED OF A SYSTEM THAT WORKS TO CREATE HOLISTIC CHANGE. "

REFERENCES

Brown, B. (2017). Braving the wilderness: The quest for true belonging and the courage to stand alone. New York, NY: Random House.

Gray, B. (1989). Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Ibarra, H., & Morten T. H. (2011). Are You a Collaborative Leader? Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2011/07/are-you-a-collaborative-leader

Thomson, A. M., & Perry, J. L. (2006). Collaboration processes: Inside the black box. Public Administration Review, 66 (s1), 20–32. doi:10.1111/puar.2006.66.issue-s1

AUTHOR BIO

Donald Abels
Louisiana State University

Donald Abels serves as the Assistant Director of Greek Life and IFC advisor at Louisiana State University. He has previously worked in fraternity and sorority life at the University of Mississippi and Middle Tennessee State University. He provides education and training to campus and inter/national organizations in the areas of harm reduction, accountability, and organizational development.

CREATING & NURTURING

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

MICHAEL A. GOODMAN / LINDSEY TEMPLETON

In a recent qualitative research study we interviewed dozens of new fraternity/sorority professionals about their work environment experiences. Within the study, a "new professional" was defined as an individual working primarily in fraternity/sorority life one year after earning a masters degree. While we looked more broadly at the experience of new fraternity/sorority professionals through the lens of Strange and Banning's (2015) framework of organizational anatomy, here, we will illuminate areas of collaboration and partnerships, as identified by participants.

We know new professionals' experiences are not exclusively representative of the field at large, however their perspectives are informative. Through this study, we found new fraternity/sorority professionals had extensive experiences with partnerships and collaboration, and employed relationships and relationship-building—even when lacking—to inform much of their work.

INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENT/OFFICE RELATIONSHIPS

For some new professionals in our study, partnerships were espoused, enacted, and built into the foundation of their individual department/office. However, for others, a disconnect between supervisors or coworkers created a barrier to partnerships and collaboration. Additionally, many participants cited feeling siloed within their roles.

One participant, Mike, built a strong relationship with the other coordinators in his office. He noted they all got along well and were constantly bouncing ideas off one another. Mike shared, "We're in this together, we're a pack … we're gonna stick to each other and have each other's backs because I don't think any of us have the best relationship with whoever we report to … we've kind of united together." While Mike created this dynamic with his teammates, this was not always the case. For example, Mike posited that relationships and teamwork were shared as priorities during his interview, but not in practice when he started his job.

He noted:

> *Getting here, I realize it's, yes, we're a team, but in a sense like every area seems siloed off from one another, and we only come together for the office meetings … While we say our office, and the university, is all about relationships and connections to one another … I don't think that's really the case … a lot of it seems a little superficial. [Mike]*

Here, Mike felt individuals were still looking out for themselves rather than the team, which was inconsistent from what was advertised during his interview. Becca had a similar experience as a new professional. In several examples, she shared that collaboration meant coming together only when needed, and that people often stay in their own "lanes." Becca cited dissonance around having a supervisor that has been at her institution for several years. She noticed that many campus partners go directly to her supervisor because of a long-standing tenure. While Becca understood the hierarchy involved in some office decisions, she felt that it limited the office's ability to bring in new perspectives.

> *We could be more collaborative and bring more people into the conversation ... knowing that it affects us all. ...There are times where I'm not brought to the table where I really question, like hey, should I have been brought to the table, or is that information going to get disseminated down to us as well as it could? [Becca]*

These department/office relationships and dynamics led to feelings of isolation for some new fraternity/sorority professionals. Similar to Becca, Rick dealt with colleagues who worked at his institution for many years together, several of whom had been accustomed to working with one another rather than including new colleagues or coworkers in different functional areas within the office/department. Rick felt isolated as a result of a siloed office dynamic, and experienced interactions where colleagues who worked on similar projects often stuck together.

Rick shared:

> *There's a lot of times that I feel like they'll be talking about something or discussing something that happened in the community that I should probably know about, but it's like they either forgot or... So I'm like, "Remember I work here…" [Rick]*

In Rick's example, he had colleagues with a similar title as his who had a well-built relationship. Rick faced the challenge of being an additional staff member who was excluded on projects and conversations, and felt a pace behind the others in his office.

While positive partnerships and collaboration are relationship-based, they must also be carefully engaged to consider the whole dynamic within an office. Furthermore, partnerships and collaboration are not solely found within functional units. For example, Rick shared that prior to starting in his role, partnerships across campus were mostly non-existent for his office. Forming genuine, good relationships with non-fraternity/sorority campus partners was a priority for him, as well as several other participants.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Outside of their office or department, participants had a robust array of campus - and organization-wide - partnerships and collaborations that were essential to their work. Aside from the responsibilities explicitly listed in their position descriptions (e.g., council and chapter advising, managing alumni, risk management, and educational programs), work included interactions and connections across multiple functionalities, including the following:

Title IX	Local city agencies/institutions
Dean of Students office	Intercultural affairs
Campus police/public safety	Wellness education
Sexual assault prevention	Counseling center
Housing and residence life	Social work program
Inter/national board members	Alcohol awareness programs
Campus ambassadors	Community service office
Campus ministry	Health promotion office
Disability support services	Student conduct

Within these partnerships and collaborations, nearly all participants talked about the relationships—or lack thereof—that were or would be helpful to them. For example, while at a national program, Katrina had the opportunity to map out all of the partners she worked with on her campus. She started with fraternity/sorority life in the middle, and then wrote all the ways her office collaborated with others.

She shared:

> *I had an entire whiteboard filled and ... I ran out of room, honestly, I had to grab a smaller marker because I ran out of all the different offices that we work with. I mean ranging from like alumni to keep an updated database of students who've graduated and are in fraternities and sororities, to campus ministries, and like working with their immersion trips, to conduct, to academic records. [Katrina]*

This was a pivotal moment for Katrina as she came to understand the expectations that existed of her as a professional and the scope of her work. Here, Katrina realized this scope encompassed a knowledge set that went beyond solely working with fraternities/sororities as independent entities. For example, Katrina collaborated with the housing and residence life office on her campus, as well as campus ministry, and student conduct. Her interactions with campus partners differed as community needs were presented each day.

Next, due to risk management expectations within their positions, Rick and DJ both worked closely with harm reduction providers, safe drinking and alcohol awareness services, and other entities to foster space for students to interact with each other about sensitive or high-risk issues. Similarly, Caroline also spent a lot of time cultivating partnerships at her institution. She shared, "I have some great partners in areas across campus that aren't the traditional 'in crowd' of people, who are always invited to the table." This included working with health entities, the Title IX office, disability services, public safety, cultural affairs, and campus ministry.

> *So folks that are not typically, that should always be at the table, but here at [institution] are not, and we've been very intentional in the last semester about building those relationships with folks that are not as valued, because we're not as valued. So this is where we find we can do good work with people that understand the experience that we're having too, because they're having the same experience. [Caroline]*

In Caroline's example, there was a camaraderie formed as a result of shared feelings involved in the work she was doing alongside campus colleagues. For Caroline and many of the participants, these same uniting moments also occurred at local and inter/national conferences and programs. There were many opportunities in the field of fraternity/sorority life that also allowed them to connect with other practitioners outside of their campus - from headquarters and organization staff, to other new professionals in a variety of contexts and capacities. Whether included in a job title, out of shared experiences, or to enhance the student experience, participants fostered relationships with organizations and departments across the institution and the field of fraternity/sorority life more broadly.

RELATING TO PRACTICE

As a result of these internal- and external-based perspectives, we examine the following questions as implications for practice:

What about collaboration and partnerships between organizations and institutions?

While our participants did not explicitly address the dynamics involved between headquarters/organization and campus-based interactions and collaborations, much can be learned about the experience of these new professionals as they interact in both capacities and experience both sides similarly. Whether in a small headquarters office, serving as "the only one" in their campus-based position, or part of a large department that works exclusively toward fraternity/sorority student outcomes, it is important to understand the intersection where organization and campus work meets. Perhaps, our participants not noting this as a key part of their experience is a finding in itself.

In both of our past work as organization and campus-based professionals, we draw a link to this relationship as an opportunity to work effectively with students. Relationships with organizations should not rest solely on the shoulders of a regional director, traveling consultant, or campus-based practitioner. Furthermore, both campus and organization new professionals must value the other in a way that makes room for effective work with students.

Have you been at your institution or organization for many years?

Consider setting up introductions between your new or younger professionals and individuals in your network of campus and community partners. This allows individuals to gain experience across multiple entities and adds a fresh perspective to a partnership or collaboration. Furthermore, there might be new or redesigned roles in various functional areas across an organization or campus, and pulling in a new perspective could reveal gaps or areas that have changed due to staff turnover or new trends in the profession. Bringing new or younger professionals into conversations that have been traditionally closed off also shows a sharing of responsibility and collaboration within a department or office.

Who are the "gatekeepers?"

According to Becca, her supervisor was well-known on campus. She posited, "I can understand the hierarchy of, you go to the Director, you go to the head and they kind of disseminate it, but there's definitely things where … we could be more collaborative and bring people into the conversation." As a Director or supervisor, it is important to examine the ways "gatekeeping" is happening within your office. For example, do you require all decisions to be filtered through you? Are you managing in a way that blocks people from sharing ownership of responsibilities? Who gets access to what information? Establishing boundaries is important, but sharing responsibilities, tasks, and information in certain ways might be contributing to others' feelings of isolation.

Are people left out of "the conversation(s)?"

Sometimes there are dynamics within a team where people are intentionally and unintentionally left out of conversations. If your office structure is one where different individuals advise different councils, this might create a silo where some individuals are never privy to certain information if not involving their council. This also might lead to misinformation within the undergraduate student community. For example, if the IFC advisor is working on an incident that occurred one weekend, the NPHC or PHA advisor(s) should have, at minimum, a baseline understanding of what is happening. They will more than likely field questions from students and/or campus partners (e.g., equity issues, social issues, comparisons, safety concerns). Having shared information internally may create a space where people feel they are knowledgeable and contributing members of the team.

Are politics getting in the way?

While relationships are necessary, they are also not without politics. Mike shared his perspective about this and noted, "Office politics and the university politics were very well-hidden during the interview process so it wasn't as apparent. Or, if it was, I didn't see it." Take time to talk as a staff about the politics involved with different campus or organizational entities. For example, who might be best to approach a particular alumni who has social capital on an organization's board? Who might be best-equipped to do equity and inclusion work, alongside the LGBTQ+ Center? Who might have a fresh perspective about connections to academic entities? When evaluating the politics of a particular responsibility or role, consider that new perspectives might be useful when strategizing a partnership or collaboration.

What partnerships and collaboration opportunities are 'hidden?'

Several of our participants named a connection to various campus or community ministry services that have been part of their work. While many practitioners might spend time with some of the more notable connections such as housing or student conduct, partnerships with campus ministry or religiously-affiliated services could lead to unique and useful partnerships. Look for these types of collaborations. For those working at an organization, this might include collaborating with nonprofit organizations, agencies, or community advocacy groups. For example, one participant noted her connection to the local city where she works. Additionally, do not underestimate the importance of institution-organization partnerships. These go beyond investigations, disciplinary matters, and grade rankings. Center these connections as important relationships in order to work most consistently from both sides.

Many of the participants in our study noted that as a fraternity/sorority professional, it felt, at times, there was a responsibility to do the work of many functional areas. While experiences with partnerships and collaborations differ in fraternity/sorority life, they show up in multiple capacities as opportunities to build, develop, and nurture relationships internally and externally. When considering collaboration and partnerships, lead with a relationship-based mindset. Include graduate students and undergraduate students in collaboration efforts. Partner with alumni, graduate chapters, administrators, and organization officers. Be open to the idea that you do not have to know and/or do it all. Collaborate intentionally and thoughtfully. And finally, create long-lasting relationships that lead to effective, holistic, and meaningful partnerships.

"BOTH CAMPUS AND ORGANIZATION NEW PROFESSIONALS MUST VALUE THE OTHER IN A WAY THAT MAKES ROOM FOR EFFECTIVE WORK WITH STUDENTS."

REFERENCES

Strange, C., & Banning, J. (2015). Designing for learning: Creating campus environments for student success (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Wiley.

AUTHOR BIOS

Michael A. Goodman
University of Maryland

Michael Anthony Goodman is a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland, studying Higher Education, Student Affairs, and International Education Policy. He is a former fraternity/sorority advisor, and spends time volunteering and facilitating for fraternities/sororities. Michael's research interests include issues around fraternity/sorority involvement and advising, student government, and LGBTQ+ identities in student affairs.

Lindsey Templeton
University of Maryland

Lindsey L. Templeton is a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland, studying Higher Education, Student Affairs, and International Education Policy. She is a former fraternity/sorority leadership consultant, graduate assistant, resident director, and volunteer. Lindsey's research interests focus on leadership equity in higher education

USING CAS STANDARDS

IN COLLABORATION WITH HEADQUARTERS

DAN BUREAU / MONICA MIRANDA

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is a consortium of 41 associations who collaborate to develop and promote standards of good practice in 44 different functional areas. According to the CAS website, "CAS creates and delivers dynamic, credible standards, guidelines, and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality programs and services. CAS aims to foster and enhance student learning, development, and achievement" (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2018).

CAS Standards are written for application by a campus fraternity and sorority advising program (FSAP) and outlines specific expectations that are common across higher education as well as specific to the functional area. The Standards were not created to help headquarters structure their organization but that does not mean they cannot be helpful in doing so. When considering partnerships between a campus and a headquarters, there are a few specific areas within the CAS FSAP Standards that could be helpful in building shared objectives.

Both campus professionals and headquarters staff should be expected to facilitate learning environments in the context of the fraternity and sorority community (Reuter, Baker, Hernandez, & Bureau, 2012). This must be a shared goal of both the campus and the headquarters staff and volunteers in order to maintain relevance on today's college campus. Furthermore, we have long espoused our organizations as learning organizations and therefore, helping students learn the key skills that higher education has learned our society and employers need should be a foremost priority (Bureau, Ryan, Ahren, Shoup & Torres, 2011; Reuter et al., 2012; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). Ensuring that learning is a part of our members' experiences on college and university campuses seems like a great way for campus and headquarters staff/volunteers to partner.

To help structure our learning and developmental priorities in a FSAP or headquarters, both can use the CAS Student Learning and Development Domains and Dimensions (SLDD&D). These six domains of learning emphasize the major skills a student needs to be successful in college, society, and the global workforce. CAS arrived at these six as a result of the work of those involved in Learning Reconsidered (2004). They are common across all sets of standards. Some standards have distinctive learning objectives as well. For example, FSAP emphasizes this list can be a starting point as you determine collaborative partnerships built on emphasizing important learning objectives. The domains and dimensions (Figure 1) are not written as learning outcomes but as broad categories or objectives. Headquarters and campus professionals looking to be more intentional could develop learning outcomes relative to a specific chapter on a campus and both can identify the ways they would know if the members are developing such skills or knowledge.

Second, the Standards consist of 12 sections (to be changed in the upcoming revisions released in early 2019). The second section is called "Program" and it includes the key programs and services to be provided to students within the functional area. This section includes the nuts and bolts of running an effective FSAP that provides programs and services that help students learn, develop, and have an overall positive fraternity/sorority experience. While the standards speak almost entirely to a campus professional, this section is a good one for a campus and headquarters to examine and to "get on the same page." For example, Figure 2 shows one standard within this section. The standard clearly states some objectives that could be of value and interest to both a campus and headquarters professional.

Finally, the functions of the Standards presents some opportunities beyond just how you try to meet the identified standards. With an emphasis on learning and ensuring there are specific programs and services in place, there is an opportunity for campus partners to involve headquarters staff in efforts to

Figure 1:

STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS

Domain: Knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application
Dimensions: understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life

Domain: Cognitive complexity
Dimensions: critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, and creativity

Domain: Intrapersonal development
Dimensions: realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness

Domain: Interpersonal competence
Dimensions: meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership

Domain: Humanitarianism and civic engagement
Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences, social responsibility, global perspective, and sense of civic responsibility

Domain: Practical competence
Dimensions: pursuing goals, communicating effectively, technical competence, managing personal affairs, managing career development, demonstrating professionalism, maintaining health and wellness, and living a purposeful and satisfying life

Figure 2:

FSAP FOCUS ON EDUCATION MUST:

- Enhance new-member and member knowledge, understanding, and competencies essential for academic success, personal and moral development, organizational development, and the practice of leadership
- Complement the academic mission of the institution
- Complement the efforts of educational programs implemented by international, national, and/or regional organizations when applicable
- Address aspects of the fraternity and sorority community that are currently or historically problematic, including applicable laws and institutional policies, housing safety, hazing, alcohol and other drug abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault, racism, intolerance based on religion or sexual orientation, and other practices and attitudes that diminish human dignity or physical and social security

collect evidence about the overall status of the fraternity/sorority community. CAS is an assessment tool in that it can be used to examine the structure and processes of a FSAP and then that evidence can be used to ascertain how well the department is doing. Often in a self-assessment process, those involved on a campus must compile evidence of how well they are doing in achieving the goals and objectives of the standards. Seeking feedback from colleagues who are headquarters staff/volunteers can be a great way to document your alignment with the FSAP standards.

Also, across the 12 sections of the Standards, there is a theme of collaboration as vital for the success of the department. FSAP is a great example of where internal and external stakeholders have a significant role in the success of staff. Therefore, involving headquarters as part of your approach to working with chapters (and not just on discipline issues) is an effective tactic to the kinds of collaborations CAS recognizes and values throughout the FSAP standards. As a FSAP conducts self-assessment it can identify the places where it can be more intentional to engage headquarters.

In closing, CAS can be a framework for effective FSAP administration. It can also be used by an FSAP as it works to engage stakeholders in the success of the department. Using our SLDD&D, identifying shared goals in our Program section, and campuses engaging headquarters in the self-assessment process as well as in creating the structures to be assessed are three ways the CAS FSAP Standards can facilitate these important partnerships.

REFERENCES

Council for the Advancement of Standards (2018). Website: Home page. Retrieved from www.cas.edu.

Bureau, D., Ryan, H.G., Ahren, C., Shoup, R., & Torres, V. (2011). Student learning in fraternities and sororities: Using NSSE data to describe members' participation in educationally meaningful activities in college. Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 6(1), 1-22.

Reuter, T.H., Baker, E.L., Hernandez, M.V., Bureau, D. (2012). A values based learning model to impact maturational change. The college fraternity as developmental crucible. Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 7(2),19-36.

Whipple, E. G., & Sullivan, E. G. (1998). Greek letter organizations: Communities of learners? New Directions for Student Services, 81, 7-17.

AUTHOR BIOS

Dan Bureau
University of Memphis

Dan Bureau is the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Memphis. He is a liaison for AFA to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Dan will be the President of CAS beginning September 2019. He served AFA as President in 2004.

Monica Miranda
University of South Florida

Monica Miranda serves as the Director of the Center for Student Involvement at the University of South Florida. She has volunteered in many capacities for the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors, including President. She currently serves AFA as the Nominations and Elections Committee Chair. Monica is a proud member of Omega Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated.

Anaheim
AFA ANNUAL MEETING 2019
CALIFORNIA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2019